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Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 CAIRO 17968

EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (ATHERTON, ALFRED L., JR.), EG, IS
SUBJ: MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL FRIDAY, JULY 28

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

U.S. DEL NO. 21

SUMMARY: IN MY INITIAL MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL EVENING OF JULY 28, TWO MESSAGES CAME THROUGH LOUD AND CLEAR AND WERE ALMOST CERTAINLY CONVEYED ON SADAT'S INSTRUCTIONS. THE FIRST WAS THAT THERE IS STILL CONSIDERABLE WORK TO BE DONE TO GET EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT TO ANOTHER ROUND OF DIRECT TALKS BEFORE SECRETARY'S VISIT. DESPITE MY EFFORTS TO PERSUADE HIM TO THE CONTRARY, KAMEL REFUSED TO SEE ANYTHING NEW IN LATEST ISRAELI FORMULATION, THAT SOVEREIGNTY CAN BE DISCUSSED AFTER FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, WHICH WOULD JUSTIFY FURTHER DIRECT CONTACTS. THIS BEING THE CASE, EGYPT NEEDS SOME PRIOR STATEMENT OF U.S. POSITION ON PEACE AND WITHDRAWAL THAT IT CAN USE PUBLICLY TO JUSTIFY "TO OUR PEOPLE" FURTHER DIRECT TALKS. SECOND MESSAGE, WHICH KAMEL MADE WITH REPETITION AND OCCASIONAL EMOTION, WAS THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF MOVEMENT ON THE ISRAELI SIDE, THE TIME HAS COME FOR A U.S. PROPOSAL, THE
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NATURE OF WHICH EGYPT NEEDS TO KNOW BEFORE IT CAN AFFORD TO ATTEND ANOTHER MEETING WITH THE ISRAELIS. WHILE KAMEL CLEARLY KEPT THE DOOR OPEN FOR FURTHER TALKS ("BUT ONLY ONE MORE MEETING"), HE STRESSED THE NEED FOR SOME FACE-SAVING DEVICE. IN DISCUSSING EGYPTIAN DESIRE FOR U.S. PROPOSAL, HE SAID THIS MUST EITHER BE A MIDDLE-GROUND PROPOSAL WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE PRESENTED ON A TAKE-IT-OR-

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LEAVE-IT BASIS ("WE WILL NOT NEGOTIATE A COMPROMISE ON A COMPROMISE"), OR IF WE INSIST THAT THERE MUST BE FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS, ANY U.S. PROPOSAL MUST BE BASED 100 PER CENT ON THE EGYPTIAN POSITION. THROUGHOUT MEETING, EILTS AND I WENT OVER AND OVER THE REASONS WHY FURTHER DIRECT TALKS ARE ESSENTIAL IF WE ARE TO PLAY THE ACTIVE ROLE EGYPT SEEKS, AND WHY EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT IS NEEDED BEFORE SECRETARY'S TRIP, BUT WE MADE NO VISIBLE IMPACT ON KAMEL. KAMEL ALSO STRESSED THE NEED FOR JORDAN TO ENTER THE PICTURE, AND VERY ABRUPTLY DISMISSED ANY NOTION THAT SADAT WOULD BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE WEST BANK AND GAZA ISSUES. EILTS AND I WILL GO BACK TD KAMEL ON THESE POINTS AT OUR SECOND MEETING SATURDAY AFTERNOON. IN ADDITION, I WILL REVIEW FOR HIM OUR ASSESSMENT OF LEEDS TALKS AND OUR IDEAS ON HOW DIFFERENCES MIGHT BE BRIDGED, WHICH THERE WAS NO TIME TO DO BEFORE OUR FRIDAY MEETING BROKE UP AT CLOSE TO 10:00 P.M. END SUMMARY.

1. I MET FOR TWO HOURS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL EVENING OF JULY 28. KAMEL HAD ONLY AHMED MAHER WITH HIM, WHILE AMBASSADOR EILTS, STERNER AND KIRBY WERE WITH ME. THE TONE OF THE MEETING WAS BASICALLY GOOD, BUT PUNCTUATED BY OCCASIONAL EMOTIONAL OUTBURSTS BY KAMEL ESPECIALLY ON THE THEMES OF THE NEED FOR A U.S. PROPOSAL AND OF BEGIN'S INTRANSIGENCE.

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2. KAMEL'S PRIMARY PURPOSE IN THE MEETING WAS OBVIOUSLY TO MAKE CLEAR HOW DIFFICULT IT WILL BE FOR EGYPT TO AGREE TO ANOTHER MEETING WITH ISRAEL IN THE ABSENCE OF EITHER NEW IDEAS FROM ISRAEL OR ASSURANCES FROM US THAT WE WERE NOW PREPARED TO PRESENT A U.S. PROPOSAL WHICH MEETS EGYPTIAN NEEDS. KAMEL IS APPARENTLY ON A VERY TIGHT LEASH, HAVING ALREADY HAD HIS KNUCKLES RAPPED BY SADAT FOR HIS STATEMENT TO YOU AT LEEDS THAT "IN THE END WE WILL GO TO ANOTHER MEETING." HE HAD IN FRONT OF HIM MORE VOLUMINOUS NOTES THAN HERMANN HAS EVER SEEN HIM USE, BUT HAD LEARNED HIS BRIEF SO WELL THAT HE DID NOT REFER TO THEM DURING OUR MEETING. HERMANN CONCLUDES THAT, IN THE POINTS HE MADE TO US, KAMEL WAS CLOSELY REFLECTING SADAT'S INSTRUCTIONS.

3. KAMEL'S PRIMARY PITCH WAS THAT THE TIME HAS NOW COME FOR THE U.S. TO PRESENT ITS OWN PROPOSAL AND IN THE ABSENCE OF THIS, ANOTHER MEETING WITH ISRAEL WOULD BE NOT ONLY FUTILE BUT DANGEROUS FOR EGYPT. TOWARD THE END OF OUR MEETING, KAMEL SUMMED UP AS FOLLOWS: "WE CANNOT GO TO THIS MEETING UNLESS YOU (MEANING MYSELF) OR SECRETARY VANCE PRESENT US AN AMERICAN PROPOSAL WHICH SPEAKS VERY

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CLEARLY AND WITH NO AMBIGUITY ABOUT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL
FROM THE WEST BANK IN RETURN FOR SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS."

4. AT NO TIME DID KAMEL SAY THAT EGYPT WOULD NOT ATTEND
ANOTHER MEETING WITH ISRAEL. HE IN FACT SAID THAT HE
PERSONALLY WAS WILLING TO ATTEND UNDER THE APPROPRIATE
CIRCUMSTANCES, ALTHOUGH HE DISLIKES SITTING DOWN WITH
"THOSE PEOPLE." HE REFERRED AT ONE POINT TO THE OVER-
RIDING NEED FOR EGYPT TO BE able TO "SAVE FACE" IN THE
ARAB WORLD SHOULD IT ATTEND ANOTHER DIRECT MEETING, AND
LEFT US ALL WITH THE FEELING THAT THE EGYPTIAN BOTTOM LINE

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IS IN FACT THE NEED FOR A FACE-SAVING FORMULA OF SOME
KIND.

5. KAMEL MADE CLEAR THAT EGYPT HOPES THE U.S. WOULD BE
ABLE TO DISCLOSE ITS PROPOSAL IN ADVANCE OF THE NEXT
MEETING. HE SUGGESTED, HOWEVER, THAT WE MIGHT PROVIDE A
LETTER THAT WOULD CLEARLY SHOW THAT THE U.S. POSITION WAS
BASED ON ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL IN RETURN FOR SECURITY AND
PEACE. HE SAID HE WOULD NEED SOMETHING SUCH AS THAT TO
USE BOTH IN EGYPT AND WITH THE WIDER ARAB PUBLIC IN
ADVANCE OF THE MEETING. KAMEL SAID THIS WAS HIS OWN
PERSONAL IDEA AND HE DIDN'T KNOW IF SADAT WOULD BUY IT.
EVEN IF HE DID, HOWEVER, THE NEXT MEETING WOULD SURELY BE
THE LAST. I ASKED ON A PURELY PERSONAL BASIS IF
EGYPT WOULD BE ABLE TO SAY THAT THE AMERICANS ARE OF THE

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OPINION THAT THERE HAS BEEN SOME POSITIVE MOVEMENT ON THE ISRAELI SIDE AND THAT, ON THAT BASIS, EGYPT WILL ATTEND. KAMEL DID NOT REACT IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER TO THIS SUGGESTION. THROUGHOUT THE MEETING, EILTS AND I OF COURSE WENT OVER AT GREAT LENGTH THE REASONS WHY WE BE-
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LIEVE ANOTHER MEETING IS ESSENTIAL. IN ADDITION, I MADE THE PRACTICAL POINT THAT IT WOULD NOT BE FEASIBLE TO WAIT UNTIL THE SECRETARY ARRIVED AND THEN DO WHAT KAMEL WAS SUGGESTING IN THE LIMITED TIME AVAILABLE. I PLAN TO REPEAT THIS IN MY SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS WITH KAMEL AND SADAT.

6. REGARDING EGYPT'S DESIRE FOR THE PRESENTATION OF A U.S. PROPOSAL, KAMEL MADE THE POINT VERY STRONGLY THAT EGYPT SEES TWO POSSIBILITIES. THE FIRST IS THAT THE U.S. PRESENT A PROPOSAL WHICH IS THEN NEGOTIATED BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL WITH U.S. MEDIATION. THE SECOND IS THAT THE U.S. PRESENT ITS PROPOSAL "AND IMPOSE IT." KAMEL SAID THAT IF WE ARE THINKING OF THE FIRST APPROACH--A U.S. PROPOSAL WHICH WOULD THEN BE NEGOTIATED--IT MUST INCLUDE EVERYTHING EGYPT WANTS. "EGYPT IS NOT GOING TO COMPROMISE ON AN AMERICAN COMPROMISE." KAMEL LEFT NO DOUBT THAT THE STRONG EGYPTIAN PREFERENCE IS FOR THE SECOND OF THESE ALTERNATIVES, I.E., THAT THE U.S. PRESENT A PROPOSAL WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE SOME ELEMENTS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE ITS ACCEPTABILITY TO ISRAEL BUT TO DO SO ON A TAKE-IT-OR-LEAVE-IT BASIS.

7. KAMEL ALSO STRESSED THE NEED FOR JORDAN TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE REFERRED TO WHAT HE VIEWED AS THE ISRAELI STRATEGY OF KEEPING JORDAN OUT, RECOGNIZING THAT THIS WOULD THUS KILL THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL WHICH IS BASED ON THE INVOLVMENT OF PARTIES OTHER THAN JUST EGYPT AND ISRAEL. IF SECRETARY VANCE COMES WITHOUT ANY PRIOR MOVE-MENT FROM JORDAN, KAMEL SAID, THE EGYPTIAN IDEA WILL BE DEAD. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ARAB WORLD WILL QUITE RIGHTLY ASK WHAT EGYPTIANS ARE DOING ON THE WEST BANK. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A FEW SPECIALISTS, HE ADDED, EGYPT
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KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT THE WEST BANK, WHILE JORDAN KNOWS IT "INCH BY INCH." THUS HE CONCLUDED IF THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL IS TO BE A CREDIBLE ONE, A WAY MUST BE FOUND TO BRING JORDAN INTO THE TALKS.

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8. AMBASSADOR EILTS ASKED KAMEL HOW HE RECONCILES THIS VIEW OF THE NECESSITY FOR JORDANIAN PARTICIPATION WITH WHAT PRESIDENT SADAT HAS TOLD NOT ONLY THE SECRETARY BUT VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE AS WELL, I.E., THAT SADAT HIMSELF WILL ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR NEGOTIATING WEST BANK AND GAZA ISSUES IF HUSSEIN REFUSES TO JOIN IN. KAMEL SHOT BACK IMMEDIATELY, "FORGET THIS. HE CAN'T DO IT. IT WON'T HAPPEN. IT WOULD BE CATASTROPHIC." HE ADDED THAT EVEN GAMASY WOULD OPPOSE IT. HE ARGUED VERY FORCEFULLY, SUPPORTED BY MAHER, THAT FROM A PURELY PRACTICAL POINT OF VIEW IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR EGYPT TO ASSUME THE RESPONSI-BILITY FOR NEGOTIATING ON BEHALF OF THE PALESTINIANS ON THE WEST BANK. HE ASKED IF IT WAS POSSIBLE, FOR EXAMPLE, TO IMAGINE EGYPT SENDING TROOPS TO THE WEST BANK, AND DESCRIBED AGAIN THE RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAS EXISTED OVER THE YEARS BETWEEN THE WEST BANK AND JORDAN WHICH MAKES JORDAN A NECESSARY PARTY TO ANY NEGOTIATIONS INVOLVING THE WEST BANK.

9. SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE MEETING KAMEL DISMISSED OUT OF HAND THE EFFORT WE HAVE BEEN MAKING TO SHOW AREAS OF COMMONALITY BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI PROPOSALS. (I DID NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY DURING THE MEETING TO MAKE MY PRESENTATION IN THIS RESPECT, BUT KAMEL OBVIOUSLY ANTICIPATED THAT I PLANNED TO DO SO.) KAMEL SAID THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE TWO PROPOSALS ARE LIKE THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN A COBRA AND A GAZELLE--THEY EACH HAVE TWO EYES, EAT AND MATE. MAHER ADDED THAT EGYPT, OF COURSE, WAS THE GAZELLE. OTHER THAN THIS, IN HIS VIEW, ONE IS A SERIOUS EFFORT TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT BASED ON RESOLUTION 242 WHILE THE OTHER IS OBVIOUSLY NOT.

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10. KAMEL PREDICTABLY DISMISSED AS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE DAYAN'S STATEMENT TO THE KNESSET MONDAY REFLECTING ISRAELI WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS SOVEREIGNTY AFTER FIVE YEARS. I TRIED MY BEST TO DESCRIBE HOW WE SEE THIS AS A SIGN OF SOME POSITIVE MOVEMENT ALBEIT INSUFFICIENT, BUT TO NO AVAIL. AMONG OTHER THINGS, I POINTED OUT THAT THE LATEST ISRAELI FORMULATION WAS BEING WIDELY INTERPRETED IN ISRAEL AS ACKNOWLEDGING FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT ARAB SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE WEST BANK AND GAZA WAS A POSSIBLE OUTCOME, AND THAT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAD NOT DENIED THIS. KAMEL WAS OF THE VIEW THAT IF THE SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE WAS ALLOWED TO BECOME A FOCUS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS THEY WILL LEAD NO-WHERE. THE FOCUS SHOULD INSTEAD REMAIN ON FULFILLING THE PRINCIPLES OF 242.

11. KAMEL IN THIS MEETING WAS VERY EMOTIONAL IN HIS REMARKS ABOUT BEGIN. HE DECRIED THE LEAKAGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED ON THE ISRAELI SIDE ESPECIALLY CONCERNING THE DATES FOR A POSSIBLE NEXT MEETING. THIS MAKES IT APPEAR, HE SAID, THAT THE MEETING IS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION AND
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LEADS OTHER ARABS TO BELIEVE THAT EGYPT IS DECEIVING THEM. HE ALSO REFERRED TO THE PUBLICITY AFFORDED THE EGYPTIAN SUGGESTION THAT ISRAEL MAKE A UNILATERAL GESTURE INVOLVING EL-ARISH. BEGIN'S REACTIONS TO THIS SUGGESTION, ACCORDING TO KAMEL, SIMPLY REPRESENTED MORE BARTERING AND PLAYING FOR TIME. AT ONE POINT KAMEL REFERRED TO BEGIN AS "ANOTHER HITLER" AND "THE FIRST TERRORIST."

12. THERE WAS NO OPPORTUNITY AT THIS MEETING TO PRESENT OUR IDEAS FOR BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE PARTIES AS WAS DONE IN TAIF AND AMMAN. I INTEND TO DO SO IN MY NEXT MEETING, HOWEVER. HERMANN BELIEVES THAT, IN ANY CASE, THE EGYPTIANS HAVE ALREADY BEEN BRIEFED, PROBABLY BY THE SAUDIS AND PERHAPS BY THE JORDANIANS AS WELL. EILTS

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